DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 025 766 AL 001 701

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Pub Date Mar 69
Note-7p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.45
Descriptors-*Contrastive Linguistics, English, Form Classes (Languages), Serbocroatian, *Translation

In this paper the author contends that no useful results can be obtained if contrastive analysis is confined to formal correspondence: it is not enough to compare languages as to the presence or absence of corresponding systems and as to the similarities or dissimilarities in the distribution of the terms of the contrasted systems. Formal correspondence may have a very low translation probability and therefore be of little value in a contrastive analysis. The author feels that the basis for contrastive analysis should be translation rather than formal correspondence. The translation approach has the added advantage of producing a series of low translation probability equivalents as well as one or more high translation probability equivalents. Together they cover the entire semantic field. As with formal correspondence, translation equivalence will not be of great help to contrastive analysis where the equivalence is practically nonexistent. But one of the advantages of the translation method is that absence of translation equivalence is much less frequent than absence of formal correspondence. (Author/DO)

ED025768

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FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE AND TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE IN CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

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Washington, D. C.

March, 1969

AL 001 701

FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE AND TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE IN CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

In contrastive analysis languages are compared to establish mutual similarities and dissimilarities. The comparison is usually done on the basis of systems at various ranks (number, person, word-classes, sentence elements, etc.), i.e. a system in one language is compared with a corresponding system in another.

Analysis based on the formal-correspondence approach compares systems in two or more languages and the distribution of the terms (system members) of the contrasted languages. It is the contention of this paper that no useful results can be obtained if contrastive analysis is confined to formal correspondence, that is, that it is not enough to compare languages as to the presence or absence of corresponding systems and as to the similarities or dissimilarities in the distribution of the terms of the contrasted systems. We believe that inter-language similarities exist also outside system similarities and that system similarities are only a part of overall similarities. We also believe that similarities and dissimilarities can be established on a broader basis than just presence or absence of systemic similarities and identical or different distribution of system terms. We shall try to show that, by a different approach, much more detailed similarities can be established. Similarities can be full (the same number of terms which show the same distribution), partial (different number of terms of corresponding systems with different distribution and/or overlapping systems), and non-existent (no systemic or equivalence similarities).

If we accept the formal correspondence approach to contrastive analysis we are faced with a number of problems. One of them is how to establish formal correspondences. In most cases it is established on the basis of intuition. We feel that certain formal items play a similar role in the structure of the languages concerned. Thus <u>the</u> in English is felt to correspond formally to <u>der</u>, <u>die</u>, <u>das</u> in German.

Formal correspondence of the items to be selected for contrastive analysis is often established also on the basis of similar labels. English personal pronouns are contrasted with Serbo-Croatian personal pronouns because of the similar terms used in the respective grammars to designate the two sets of items.

There is a serious question, however, as to whether formal correspondence can offer an effective approach to contrastive analysis. We believe that formal correspondence is far from satisfactory for purposes of contrastive analysis, since it often establishes similarities which are of little practical value while ignoring subtler forms of similarity which, although they may be less frequent than the formal correspondences, must be taken into account in contrastive research. An example is reflexivity in English (E) and Serbo-Croatian (S-C). Both languages have verbs with reflexive objects and such verbs are felt to be formally correspondent. But statistics show that the S-C reflexive _se_ corresponds in E more often to zero or nothing than to one of the _-self_ forms. Similarity of distribution assigns to the _-self_ forms the role of formal correspondents, but if this fact is accepted as a basis for contrastive analysis, the result will be that we will have to warn the speaker of S-C _against_ forming his sentences on the evidence of formal correspondence if we do not want him to produce E sentences of the type _I am walking myself_, _I am laughing myself_, which do not occur in E. On the other hand, we cannot say that zero or nothing is the formal correspondent, because the S-C sentence _Umiva se_ with the reflexive _se_ has as its E equivalent _He is washing himself_, in addition to _He is washing_. Since instances of _se_ as verb object have as their only phonetically realized E formal correspondents the _-self_ forms, we take the _-self_ forms as the formal correspondents of the S-C _se_. As for the phonetic zero in E where _se_ occurs in S-C, we are not sure whether what is involved is a zero morpheme (a transitive verb with zero object: _I shave every morning_), or nothing at all. Thus we are faced with formal correspondence with very low equivalence probability. It is obvious that such a formal correspondence will have little practical value in contrastive analysis.

Even in the cases where formal correspondence exists for a large number of instances, there are areas of similarities between the contrasted languages which are not covered by formal correspondence. Thus my in my father in E corresponds to moj in moj otac in S-C. A similar situation obtains in thousands of other instances. The conclusion is that the forms my, your, etc., have as their S-C formal correspondents the forms moj, tvoj, etc. However, closer scrutiny reveals that while this is true for over fifty percent of cases of my, etc., there still remains a rather high percentage of instances where my, etc., corresponds in S-C to the enclitic dative of personal pronouns, to the reflexive se, to zero, etc. If, for purposes of contrastive analysis, we take into consideration only those items which are formally correspondent in the languages contrasted, no useful contrastive analysis is likely to result; because such an analysis will ignore, as often occurs, other similarity relationships which are not formal correspondences in the languages analyzed although they are equivalencies.

The learner will react in the same intuitive way and select E possessive adjectives as formal correspondents of S-C possessive adjectives and will, equating formal correspondence with equivalence, produce an impermissibly high percentage of sentences in L_2 on the model offered by formal correspondence which will be wrong, the mistakes occurring in the area where equivalence is not intuitively obvious and where the established formal correspondences in sentences like Take (the) hand out of (the) pocket, modeled on S-C Izvadi Ø ruku iz Ø džepa, where the formal correspondence "moj, etc., equals my, etc." are no longer present, and Ø is not intuitively felt to have the function of E possessive adjectives in certain environments, as in Take your hand out of your pocket. This means that even in cases where formal correspondence can be established intuitively, or in some other way, the learner will have to be told not to rely on it entirely.

In some cases it is almost impossible to establish any kind of direct formal correspondence and no intuitive or other correspondence offers itself. This is the case with the E article for a speaker of S-C. He is quite helpless before it since there is nothing directly discernible in his language which could serve as a formal correspondence he could utilize when going from S-C to E. In such cases, for all practical purposes, we have to give up contrastive analysis, since the only thing we contrast is the absence of a set of morphemes in one language with their presence and characteristic distribution in the other. Although no correspondence can be established, it is possible to establish certain equivalence relations on the basis of word-order, demonstratives, objects of perfective and imperfective verbs, selection of certain lexical items, etc., which, although rather unreliable and optional, can give the learner some idea of the function of article forms in E. In such cases even the formal-correspondence approach to contrastive analysis occasionally has to give up contrasting similar formal categories and try to establish similarity by means of other values, saying, for instance, that S-C imperfective verb "raditi" corresponds to E "work" and the S-C perfective verb "uraditi" to E "accomplish", which is definitely not a contrastive analysis of the category of aspect in the two languages.

Full similarity exists when formal correspondence covers the same semantic field as equivalence and the distribution of the formal items involved is the same in the languages contrasted. Thus, Slovene and Serbo-Croatian distinguish the same adjective types showing the same distributional characteristics.

We have tried to show that similarities between two languages may be close, remote or even non-existent. Where they do exist they may be only partly manifested by formal correspondence. Formal correspondence may have a very low translation probability and therefore be of little value in a contrastive analysis. It seems obvious than an approach to contrastive analysis based, as most - if not all - approaches have been,

on formal correspondence will produce only partial results. If this view is accepted, there arises the question: what, then, should be the basis for contrastive analysis? Our experience is that such a basis can be provided only by translation. This means that we select a set of formal items in Language 1, translate them, together with their context, into Language 2. This gives us the Language 2 translation equivalents of the selected Language 1 items, which will include also their formal correspondents, if any, and frequently also the differences in the distribution of the items in the two languages, if the relevant items in the corpus in Language 1, prior to translation, are analyzed according to their distribution. It will probably be necessary to establish a similar analysis also for the resulting translation equivalents in Language 2.

The translation approach has another apparent advantage. It usually produces, in addition to one or more high translation probability equivalents, a series of low translation probability equivalents, and the two together cover the entire semantic field. Thus, the translation of a corpus containing E possessive adjectives into S-C yields not only possessive adjectives (the result which we get if we accept the formal-correspondence approach), but also personal pronouns in their enclitic dative forms, the enclitic form of sebi (i.e. si), the reflexive pronoun (se), possessive adjectives derived from nouns (očev = father's), words like vlastiti, rođeni (one's own), etc., that is, the whole field of "possessivity"; similarly an E corpus containing this, that will produce in addition to ovaj, taj and onaj, a whole series of words containing the ov-, ta-, on- morphemes (ovdje = here, tamo = there, onamo = yonder, ovako = this way, tako = that way, etc.), the unproductive demonstrative morpheme -s (večeras = this evening, jesenas = this autumn, jutros = this morning, etc.) that is, the whole field of "demonstrativity."

As with formal correspondence, translation equivalence will not be of great help to contrastive analysis where the equivalence is practically nonexistent. But one of the advantages of the translation method is that absence of translation equivalence is much less frequent than absence of formal correspondence.

Our conclusion is that the formal correspondence approach excludes in advance the possibility of semantic similarities between items which are not beforehand established as formally correspondent. Thus, if we decide that nouns in E and S-C are formally correspondent, we exclude all instances of other word-classes which are the only equivalents of certain E nouns in certain invironments. Formal correspondence allows for some differences in the distribution of items selected to be contrasted but it does not allow for similarities among items belonging to different categories.

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February 14, 1969